SANDA

Chapter 5
A pledge taken in front of the cake shop

THE WORLD OF CHILDREN LIES AHEAD

AND DARK EYES THAT LOST THEIR SHINE A LONG TIME AGO...
SUNKEN CHEEKS,
PALE LIPS,
WRINKLES ALL OVER THE FACE,
UNKEMPT GREY HAIR...
FACING AN ABNORMAL ADULT!!?

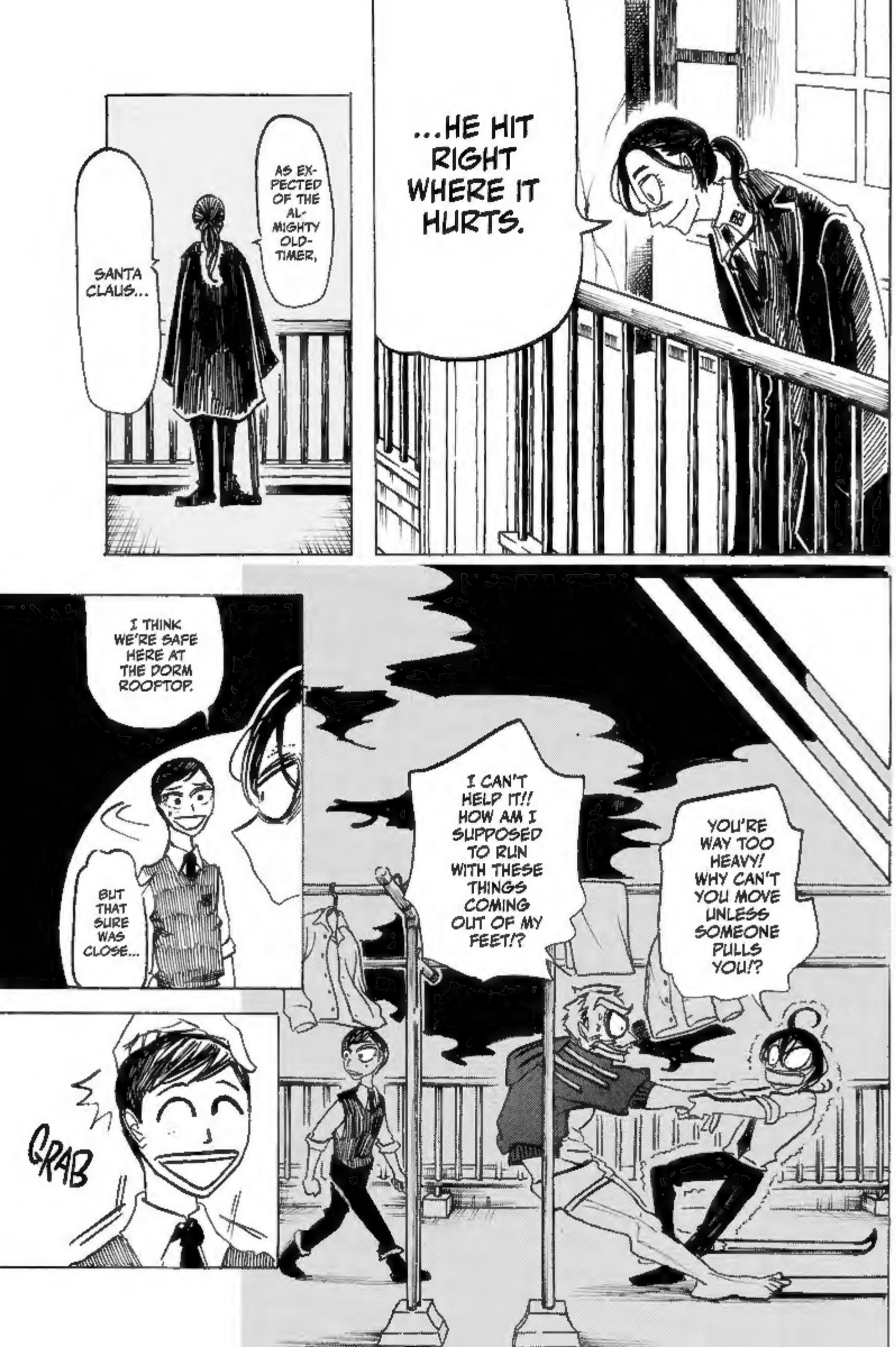
NOT TRUE. MY BODY HAS GONE THROUGH THE MOST EXTREME LEVEL OF DE-AGING.
...YOU'RE JUST AS MUCH OF AN OLD-TIMER AS ME.
NOT ONLY ARE YOU TRESPASSING, BUT YOU'RE ALSO AN UNSIGHTLY OLD-TIMER. DON'T EXPECT ME TO SHOW YOU ANY MERCY.

DO YOU REALLY SUPPOSE JUST ANY OLD MAN...
WOULD BE QUALIFIED TO RUN THIS ACADEMY?
THEN, LET ME ASK YOU THIS...
WHAT DID YOU HAVE FOR DINNER THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST?

IF YOU CAN'T ANSWER IN 5 SECONDS, THEN YOUR DE-AGING DID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR YOUR BRAIN.
FIVE.
4
JUST GIVE ME A...
TWO.
THREE.
...THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST!?
PUSH...
FOUR.
...
I HAD FISH AND VEGETABLES... BUT... THAT WAS LAST NIGHT, I BELIEVE...?
UMM... UHH...
ONE.

AH!
...
ZERO.
TIME'S UP.
5
I HAD BOILED TOFU!!
SWISH

GRAB
DROP!
HOLD ON TIGHT, YOU TWO!!
ONLY GEEZERS EAT THAT STUFF.


...HE HIT RIGHT WHERE IT HURTS.
AS EXPECTED OF THE ALMIGHTY OLD-TIMER,
SANTA CLAUS...
I THINK WE'RE SAFE HERE AT THE DORM ROOFTOP.
BUT THAT SURE WAS CLOSE...
I CAN'T HELP IT!! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO RUN WITH THESE THINGS COMING OUT OF MY FEET!?
YOU'RE WAY TOO HEAVY! WHY CAN'T YOU MOVE UNLESS SOMEONE PULLS YOU!?
GRAB

FUYU-
MURA!
TH
UD

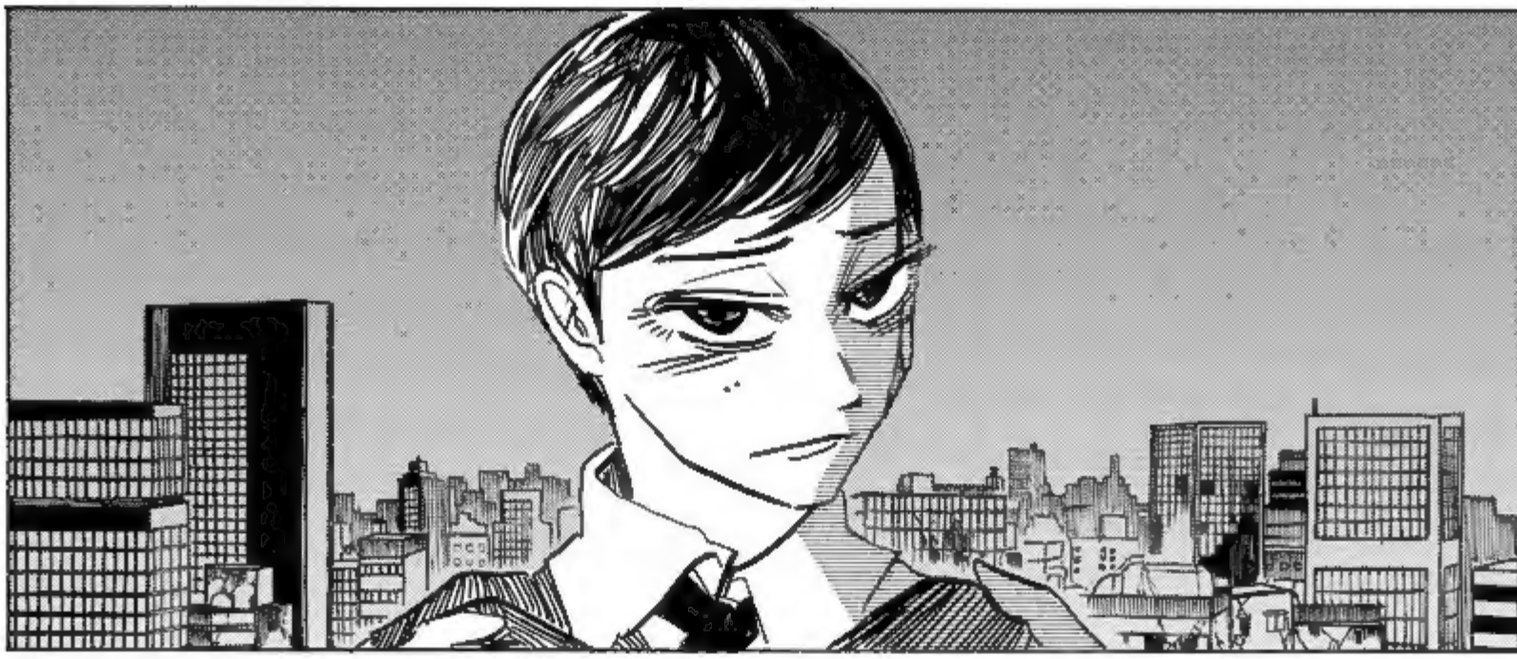
B

YOU TRIED TO THREATEN ME AND SANDA.
YOU TASED US, TIED US UP, AND THEN THREATENED US. IT MAY HAVE BEEN FOR A STUPID PRANK OR WHATEVER...

Ah...
Ah...

NOW THAT YOU KNOW SANDA'S SECRET, I'M GONNA HAVE TO KILL YOU.
YOU COULD'VE JUST KEPT QUIET. THIS IS YOUR OWN FAULT.
CALM DOWN, FUYUMURA!!
I DIDN'T...

I HAVE A MISSION, SO, I...!
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANTED TO DO IT, EITHER...



...?

I DON'T THINK THAT COOL AND GLOOMY FACE YOU SOMETIMES DO TO BUY SOMEONE'S SYMPATHY WILL WORK WITH FUYUMURA.
...AMAYA, I'LL TELL YOU THIS AS YOUR ROOM-MATE,

YOU'RE AN EYESORE.
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, IT'S TRUE!!
I NEED SANDA-!!
TO BRING BACK SANTA CLAUS!!

WITH HOW THINGS ARE RIGHT NOW, IT'S INEVITABLE. THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN KEEPS DECREASING, AND OUR COUNTRY JUST KEEPS GETTING WORSE.
MY FAMILY HAS RUN A CAKE SHOP FOR A LONG TIME... BUT WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF BUSINESS.

...
ISN'T THAT RIGHT ...?

This country was much more active at one point. Many buildings from that time have now been abandoned, left to decay.
Our school building was once a huge shopping complex.

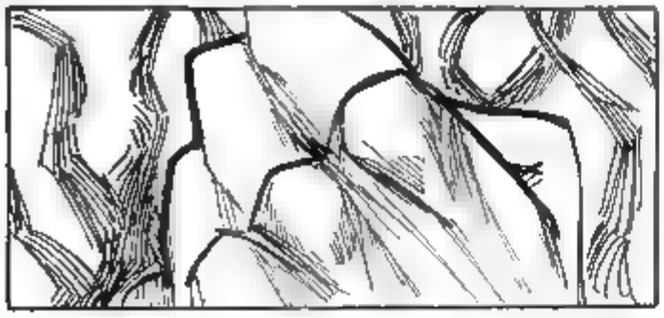
IF THEY REALIZE THAT THE LEGEND IS REAL, THEN THEY SHOULD START CELEBRATING THE EVENT CALLED CHRISTMAS AGAIN!!
BUT IF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY REALIZE THAT SANTA CLAUS IS REAL,

WE'D FINALLY GET BUSY IN DECEMBER AGAIN...
THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF PUSH OUR SHOP NEEDS TO GET BACK UP AND RUNNING AGAIN. WE'D BE ABLE TO SELL CAKES TO EVERYONE LIKE WE USED TO...

These two are the only ones that believe in me...
People of this era no longer believe in Santa.

It's really weird.

SOUNDS REALLY CHILDISH, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S TRUE OR NOT.
I DON'T TRUST YOU.



...I SHOULD AT LEAST BE MORE TRUST-WORTHY THAN AN ADULT.
YOU SAW THE PRINCIPAL JUST NOW, RIGHT!? WE RAN AWAY TOGETHER.

If I only hold power worth two faithful kids...
why does it feel like there's so much more power flowing inside me?

SHWFF

EVERYONE IN THIS COUNTRY WILL EVENTUALLY TURN INTO ABNORMAL ADULTS LIKE PRINCIPAL OSHIBU. I CAN'T TRUST ANY OF YOU!!

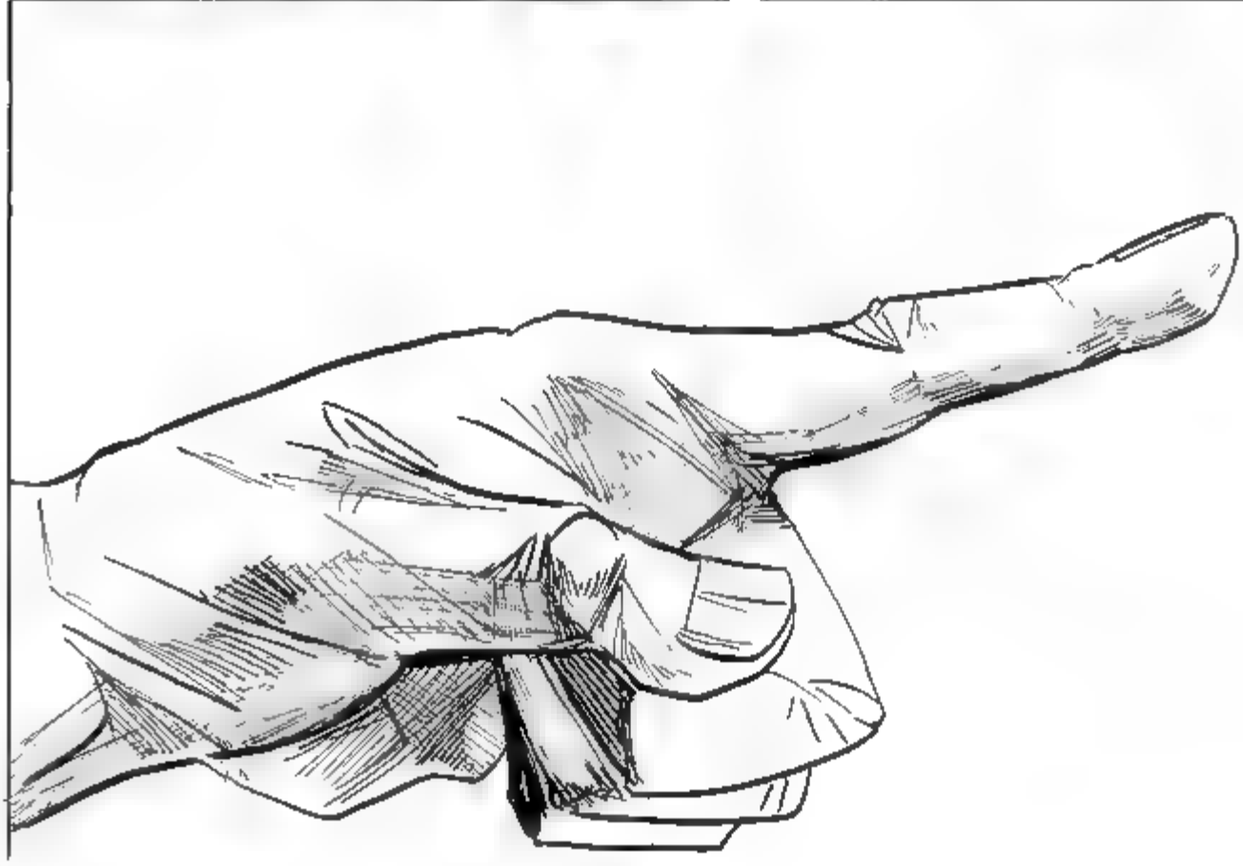
EVEN KIDS WILL TURN INTO ADULTS AT SOME POINT. IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHETHER OR NOT I CAN TRUST THEM.

WHAT AMAYA'S SAYING IS TRUE.

FUYU-MURA.

I CAN TELL...
'CAUSE I CAN SEE IT.

...ANOTHER ONE OF SANTA CLAUS'S ABILITIES?



IT'S EASIER TO LOOK AT THINGS THAT ARE FAR AWAY ONCE YOU'RE THIS OLD.

YOU CAN SEE THEIR SHOP IN THE NORTH.
Patisserie Amaya

IT SAYS AMAYA PATI... SOME-THING.
PATIS-SERIE.
HUH!? THAT'S JUST PRESBY-OPIA!!
YOU MEAN THAT?
MY BODY WOULDN'T HOLD UP IF I KEPT DEVELOPING POWERS ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

BESIDES, THIS IS ALSO AN ABILITY IN ITS OWN RIGHT.
GROWING OLD DOESN'T JUST MEAN YOU GET WEAK, FUYUMURA. I CAN VOUCH FOR THAT.
SANDA... THANK YOU, FOR REAL...
WAIT!! THERE ARE THINGS I NEED TO CONFIRM BEFORE I CAN LISTEN TO ANY REQUESTS!!
GOT ANY PUCHIKKO GUMM ES, FUYUMURA?

SIGH... THERE WE GO.

I DON'T WANT MY IDENTITY TO BE REVEALED ANY FURTHER.
EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED TODAY WILL BE A SECRET BETWEEN US.
I'LL MAKE SURE THAT NOTHING EVER HAPPENS TO YOU TWO.
AS LONG AS THIS PROMISE IS KEPT,
PRINCIPAL OSHIBU MIGHT HAVE AN EYE ON US.

IT'S A PROMISE.

I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
GREAT. GIVE ME YOUR HAND, FUYU-MURA!
...

AS LONG AS THESE TWO ARE RELYING ON ME, MY SECRET WON'T GET OUT...
AMAYA WANTS SANTA CLAUS TO RETURN FOR THE SAKE OF HIS FAMILY...
FUYU-MURA WANTS TO LOOK FOR HER FRIEND TOGE-THER...
AND SHE'S EVEN MORE HELL-BENT THAN ME TO KEEP IT A SECRET.
BUT I DO WONDER HOW FUYUMURA LEARNED ABOUT MY TRUE IDENTITY...

A HUGE S.
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. HE EVEN WENT AND CARVED OUT HIS SIGNATURE ON THE FLOOR BEFORE HE LEFT.
YES...
LARGE BUILD, WHITE BEARD, SKI-BLADES COMING OUT OF HIS LEGS... AND THOSE EYES— IT COULD REALLY ONLY BE HIM.
...
IT'S THE MAN YOUR TEAM'S SO DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR, SANTA CLAUS.

IT'S TIME FOR THE RED COATS TO MAKE THEIR MOVE,
OFFICER FUYU-MURA.
...FUYU-MURA!?
次号 No. 40 につづく

SANDA

PRESENTED BY
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